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Viewing cable 07BERN258, IRAN: SWISS POLDIR AMBUEHL TELLS EUR A/S FRIED HE \

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#07BERN258**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
07BERN258	2007-03-16 07:49	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Bern

Appears in these articles:

http://www.letemps.ch/swiss_papers

VZCZCXRO7217
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDIR RUEHKUK
DE RUEHSW #0258/01 0750749
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 160749Z MAR 07
FM AMEMBASSY BERN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3815
INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE

2007-03-16 07:49:00 07BERN258 Embassy Bern CONFIDENTIAL VZCZCXRO7217\
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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3815\
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/15/2017 \
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KNNP](#) [PARM](#) [UNSC](#) [SZ](#)
SUBJECT: IRAN: SWISS POLDIR AMBUEHL TELLS EUR A/S FRIED HE \

IS GOING TO TEHRAN \

Classified By: Ambassador Peter Coneway, Reasons 1.4 b/d \

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Summary \

1.(C/NF) Swiss State Secretary of Foreign Affairs Michael \
Ambuehl told visiting EUR A/S Fried and Ambassador Coneway on \
March 9 that he planned to visit Tehran the week of March 12, \
claiming that IAEA DG ElBaradei had encouraged Ambuehl to \
tell Iranian Nuclear Negotiator Ali Larijani that Iran was \
facing its "last chance." A/S Fried and the Ambassador \
cautioned strongly against the visit, noting that a Swiss \
visit could be misinterpreted and used by Iranian officials, \
particularly given Bern's status as U.S. protecting power in \
Tehran. Ambuehl assured the USG that his message would be \
identical to that of the UN Security Council and IAEA, namely \
that Iran must suspend all enrichment activities and accept \
its international obligations. Ambuehl's staff informed \
Embassy on March 12 that he was on his way to Tehran and \
would provide a readout immediately upon return. End \
summary. \

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"Last Chance" Message for Iran \

2.(C/NF) Swiss State Secretary Michael Ambuehl met with A/S \
Dan Fried and the Ambassador on March 9 at Zurich Airport, \
joined by Swiss DFA Americas Desk official Urs Hammer and \
Poloff. Ambuehl told A/S Fried that he planned to fly to \
Tehran the week of March 12 to meet with Iranian Nuclear \
Negotiator Ali Larijani. Ambuehl said that he wanted to \
brief A/S Fried and the Ambassador in order to keep the USG \
fully apprised of Swiss activities, per Ambassador Coneway's \
request. His purpose, he said, would be to push Iran to \
accept the three "modalities" demanded by the UN Security \
Council and IAEA, namely: \

-- Suspension of all enrichment activities, with "no tricks;" \
-- Transparency with the international community; and \
-- Acceptance of rights and obligations as defined by the \
IAEA and UNSC resolutions. \

3.(C/NF) Ambuehl said he had been encouraged to travel to \
Iran by IAEA DG ElBaradei, with whom he had spoken three \
times in recent days. ElBaradei told Ambuehl that he had \
spoken with Secretary Rice and suggested that "we have to use \
the Swiss" to urge the Iranians to abide by UNSC resolutions. \
Notably, ElBaradei had not conveyed what the Secretary's \
response (if any) was. In any event, Ambuehl would tell the \
Iranians that this was their "last chance." He acknowledged \
that a Swiss effort would have only a 30 percent chance of \
success, but described the visit as low-risk, high potential \
gain. \

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Counterargument \

4.(C/NF) Ambassador Coneway challenged Ambuehl to describe \
what if anything new the Swiss could tell the Iranians. It \
was a delicate time in the stand-off between the P5 plus 1 \
and Iran; silence would be the best policy by Switzerland. \
Moreover, Tehran would be unlikely to see this as a "last \
chance." A/S Fried told Ambuehl firmly that the USG had been \
concerned by some Swiss actions. Side initiatives could \
encourage the Iranians to game the unity of the international \
community. Bern's status as U.S. Protecting Power could also \
cause Iran to misconstrue Swiss actions. \

5.(C/NF) Ambuehl insisted that his prospective visit would \
not undermine the P5 plus 1. His points would be exactly the \
points agreed to by the UN Security Council and supported by \
the IAEA. Iran's rebuff of the Swiss initiative would be \
recognized as further evidence of Tehran's intransigence. \

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6.(C/NF) A/S Fried reiterated that the international \ community had finally gained traction against Iran. It was \ important to let the pressure work. A/S Fried urged Ambuehl \ to make no firm plans until we could speak to officials in \ Washington. In any event, Ambuehl should make clear to the \ Iranians, if he does in the end go, that he did not speak for \ the USG. Ambuehl said that this went without saying. \ Ambuehl asked for understanding of the difficult situation he \ was in (we surmise this means the directive from Foreign \ Minister Calmy-Rey to engage with Iran on this issue). \ Options other than a flat "no" would be appreciated. A/S \ Fried and Ambassador Coneway agreed to get back to him as \ soon as possible. \

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Ambassador Coneway's follow up call to Ambuehl \
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7.(C/NF) Using points provided by P staff, Ambassador Coneway \ called Ambuehl that night with the message that the USG had \ made its opinion clear. There was nothing new in the Swiss \ proposal and the visit presented many opportunities for \ misinterpretation. The decision to go would be a sovereign \ Swiss decision to take. If Ambuehl chose to go, the \ Ambassador stressed, it must be clear that he was not acting \ on the USG's behalf. \

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8.(C/NF) Ambuehl's initial response was that he would \ consider the USG points. However, his diplomatic advisor \ Stephan Estermann called DCM on March 12 to announce that \ Ambuehl was on his way to Tehran and would provide a briefing \ upon his return. \

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Comment \
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9.(C/NF) A/S Fried and Ambassador Coneway were very clear in \ their expression of concern about Ambuehl's planned travel to \ Tehran. However, it is obvious that the Swiss think there is \ at least the chance that the engagement of a "disinterested" \ non-member of the P5 plus 1 could offer Tehran a face-saving \ way to give into the UN Security Council - a belief \ apparently reinforced by ElBaradei. Ambuehl was noticeably \ uncomfortable not taking the USG's advice. But, there is \ little surprise in his decision to go forward with the visit, \ given the clear mandate he has received from Swiss Foreign \ Minister Calmy-Rey. \
CONEWAY \